

Pleasant Introductions  
x & I.

What are you reading when I come in, dear Mr. Lomax?  
I am afraid I disturbed you."

Mr. Child; you know I am always glad to have you;  
and as for disturbing me, why, you know, there are  
friendships so close that the presence of another is  
no check upon communion. I was reading  
my old friend, my wise friend, 'Lynch', that  
Englishman. dear counsellor has helped me over many  
a bad place in my life. Ah! now, you don't  
recognise 'Lynch' as you would 'Longfellow',  
or 'Coleridge'; I suppose I should have said  
the poems of Archbishop Lynch."

I did not know he had written any poetry. I know  
- I mean, I have looked into - his 'Parables', &  
'Miracles'; Father has them, you know, in his  
'Divinity Shelf.'

Yes, I know; I have done more than look into them,  
but - valuable works as they are, I am not prepared  
to write them on my list - <sup>particulars</sup> - ~~most~~ helpful  
friends. But here - between these green covers -  
how English, yes, I could make my friend  
over to you! But you are too young. How  
could I expect - a girl to care for the ripeness  
of wisdom, the broad & deep experience, the  
fearless liberality of soul which are full  
of great refreshment - as well as of power  
& strength in an old woman like me!"

"Do you know, Mrs. Lomax I think you are  
making just - a very bit - of a mistake?"

"Really?" and Mr. Lomax repeated herself

with a long look into the blushing countenance & smiling eyes of her young friend. "And when does my sweet-mentor think I am wrong?"

"Am I being pert? Please, don't mind! But don't you know that it is for those things I have given every bit of my heart - to you, & care for you less now than for any girl friend I ever had! And Jessie ~~has~~ snatched too swift a kiss & put the white fingers then to mine, shield her flowing hair on her friend's shoulder.

"How good of you as to me, Child! & I need not say, how dear! Cela va sans dire. But is it really true that you young things care so much about wisdom & experience?"

"Oh don't you see, Mrs. Lovers, how ignorant & foolish we feel! Of course we know quite well that we don't know anything, & just that other people may not be up to us, we carry things off with a high hand, & make believe to believe in ourselves! But that's a great deadly secret - don't tell any one in the world, or where should we poor girls be?"

"Not I; & to reward you, I'll tell you a secret: when you dear girls come to us, we old people have to 'make believe very much', like the Marchioness & the orange-peel wine, for if we didn't pretend to think you as wise as the Queen of Sheba at least - we should never get you foolish notions to have any confidence in yourselves at all. There now, we're quits!"

A clear ringing laugh from Jessie, then -  
"Oh, if this is not delicious! Come just hunting each

28 p. 23  
part-humbug each other all round, each thinks  
the other doesn't! But now for 'Lunch!' do you  
think I may venture to be so intimate until I  
know him better? Well, what I want you to do  
is to introduce me to him. I can always  
find my way about - in a book somewhat  
better, than somebody who knows the road  
takes me for the first time. It's a confession of  
youthful laziness, but - do you know I shall  
to open a book with 'Unexplored' on the back.  
I mean, when I don't know anything about the  
author or his works!"

"So do I, & I don't think it's laziness at all,  
for you might get into very barren country, or  
into a clough!"

"Oh, but that is not all. Were the country ever colonized  
I should want to come over to them on the best points  
of view; I should care for them after my own  
you know, & often come along, but I suppose  
I'm not clever enough to find them out the  
first time for myself."

Now I was pained for a minute or two: she was  
really debating with herself whether she should take  
the girl's tempting offer & lead her through some  
by-paths of literature dear to herself: the broad highway  
of ~~her~~ was familiar with; that is, if she  
did not know, she knew about most of your  
first books - you had she not just left school? -  
And, somehow, to know about a thing takes the  
edge off curiosity; you don't want to know any  
more. The prospect was enticing: what would it  
be to set that bright young intelligence to search



right?"

"A capital text, & I believe you have hit on the best lines in the poem. Did you notice these?"

"In these high raptures there is nothing coarse,  
Nothing which we can rest on to sustain  
The spirit - long, or even it to endure  
Against temptation, weariness, or pain?"

"Yes, I noticed them the more because the writer  
had just been saying such beautiful things  
about the lady's voice. I should not have liked <sup>such</sup> ~~them~~  
if they stood alone. Remit that just what people  
think now, that if we can give working people  
'high raptures' - music & interesting & nice things  
about them - we shall be making them really  
happy & good? I have thought often that I should like  
but - then, that's too silly!"

"You have thought - that you would like to spend your  
life in beautifying <sup>those</sup> girls like yourself who live  
in a cordial way? I'm not sure that you could do  
better. Only bear one caution in mind: - Has the  
most glorious concert - you ever heard made you  
better the next day, more earnest - & able to live  
a good day?"

"I'm afraid not, but isn't that my fault?"

"I doubt it; these delights <sup>as in their very elevating</sup> they are & thought  
are very pleasant - ~~about~~ <sup>but</sup> it is a duty to  
spread them as widely as we can; but we must  
remember all the time that it is not by these  
things men live. And, to go on with our poet:

"It is his sonnets which delight me most.  
Sometimes, the whole is a gem but almost always  
there is at least one gem. The couplet is full  
of truth & wisdom & of beauty: listen to this: -

"One rather may to tears unbidden move  
The

36  
- The meanest print - that on a college wall -  
then that he should care for <sup>more</sup> ~~nothing~~ but the works of  
torn & mighty marked, because time come for art - should  
make him reverence the rudest attempt  
'To win the beauty that is floating round  
Into abiding forms of peace & power'.

"Thank you, that is a lesson! You will think me  
very mean, but - do you know I'm sometimes  
afraid to admire a picture until I know some big  
person has painted it? And as you tears over the  
scripture prints in cottages! - I'm afraid I laugh!  
But that - a beautiful sensitive look - you  
those lines show. And the last two - I don't  
see how Chaucer himself could have said it  
better. & I'm sure Wordsworth could not."

- Perhaps not? The first line reminds me a  
little of Wordsworth but - I don't remember any lines  
of his that so <sup>poetically</sup> ~~exactly~~ hits off the musician part.  
But just - you call his sensitive nature - his  
power of feeling beauty in common things, here is  
an instance -

'How thick the wild. flowers blow about our feet; -  
we pass them by unheeded; but: if we pause a  
farther on & gaze into its beauty -  
Then if there cannot say

It wet with thankful tears into thy bosom, well!'

"Oh, do you know, I have often felt that! The wood-  
anemone & the lesser celandine always make  
me cry. That is, if I just - pick one & look into it; -  
- Oh! mark me a baby, - kiss it!"

"Dear girl! Now, how much I could make you feel  
the chastened piety of the poet; - so simple & sweet -  
holiness for the market-place and - for the cloister! -  
Here is one example, in the Sonnet - beginning,

'If sorrow came not near us,' sending thus -  
'That we may weep - when grief & pain is over -  
With the much love of our all - dear loves.'

How beautiful!" cried Grace with eyes suppressed, "it  
is worth while to have written a book of only to have  
said those two last words. I shall never forget them.  
Now, looking up helpfully. - I declare you older people  
think we girls have no sorrows, but you don't know how  
dreadfully things hurt! I'm sure every streak my  
heart a great deal oftener than another."

"I know it too, dear; & Mrs. Somers clothed the  
bright young head very tenderly: "You young things  
are all over sensitive fibres - the least unquieted  
touch will make you wince. You suffer far more  
readily than we tougher older people. Folks, but then,  
O! it, your joys are far more tender & avoid. O! like  
the young man rejoice in his youth!"

"Thank you for understanding! And that's why  
I like your poet, dear Mrs. Somers - he quicks the joy,  
& comforts the sadness!"

"And that's why I like him! For the joy, listen to this,  
to his child -"

'Thy gladness makes me thankful every way,  
with this most-helpful ending, -

'Joy is of God, but heaviness & care,

Of our own hearts & what has harboured there.'

"But - how are you to <sup>keep</sup> things that make you un-  
happy from 'harboring there'?"

"He has an answer for that, too; one of the most  
flourish of the counsels - I mean, as it breathes  
of Christian experience; -

'Lord, what a change within us our short hours  
Spent - in thy presence will prevail to make, -

Why imagine should we do ourselves this wrong,

That - as should ever make us heavier be,

Ancient or troubled, when with us is prayer

And joy, & strength & comfort with Thee?"

"Oh! I shall learn that, say it - & ever when I  
am

as - miserable! Don't laugh, indeed I am sometimes;  
mostly means in not a bit good or well or anything  
any one could like if they could see into me!

"Ross faint! Does this express it? -

"Lord, many times I am awfully guilty  
Of minding our self, my sin, my minority -

O, would you rather hear Keble's -

"For what if Heaven for once its secret light  
Lent - to some partial eye, disclosing all

The ugly bad thoughts, that in our bosoms night

Wanders at large, our heed loves gentle threat!"

"How wonderful it is that poets should know ~~so~~  
The secret - thoughts we never tell to any one!"

"Ah, my dear, hardly so wonderful as you think!  
You young ones <sup>believe</sup> ~~think~~ that all the things, sayings,  
high endeavours & miserable failures are the secret  
histories of our hearts alone; we elders know  
but - our worst - ~~as~~ our best - is common to all  
human hearts - only this, some harbour the good  
suggestion the bad; others, harbour the bad & seal our  
the good. Then, too, we, <sup>elders</sup> ~~then~~ hating ourselves, have  
learned to say with Keble -

"Take Thou my part - against myself, and there  
In that - fight be!"

O, with Keble, -

"The Lord who dwells on high  
Knows all, yet loves us better than we know."

"Oh dear! life is confusing! And indeed it is  
a wonder that God can see us!"

"Something has gone wrong with my bright young  
Jessie today! But - tomorrow she will forget - all  
these dark thoughts. Inevitably, as we think  
about - something else. I want - you to notice  
how our part - behaves & quists himself like a wounded  
child."

child. & seems to have made a great fight with no  
pride that hereto all goes; & to keep a lovely child's  
heart in his high place was indeed a work of grace. Listen  
to this, -

'If that in sight of God is great -  
Which cometh itself in small,  
By that low humility  
The chiefest-grace must call,  
Which being such, not knows itself  
To be a grace at all.'

"And I am so proud!"  
"Will this do?"

'When we have yielded to chasten & restrain  
Our wandering thoughts, -  
& indulge in delightful day-dreams, 'ourselves the centre'  
to wake up with 'dawn & sick desires' to the every-day  
duties, -

'Then in the world of hearing is there spell  
So mighty as at times like this to bind  
Of years sitting by Samarians well  
Or teaching some poor fishers on the shore?' "

"O. Pardon me! that will help me to keep my thoughts  
in order - 'sitting by Samarians well? He was content -  
Spent himself upon one. But I thought - it was only  
foolish girls who built castles in the air! It is worth  
while to 'chasten & restrain' our thoughts when you  
know wise people have the same battles to fight. But -  
why don't you read -

'Thou canst not - to thy place by accident, -  
to me cannot know & am so glad of?'

'Because I thought you would be sure to know it: you  
must read 'quietus Martyn'. There is much in it that  
you will feel has come out of your own experience: &  
some lovely lines: -

The beauty of the wilderness  
Was lying on me like a curse;  
Only the low surge at my feet -  
Uttered a soothing murmur sweet, As

As every broken wave  
Sinks gently to a quiet grave,  
Dying on the bosom of the sea.

The cadences reminds you of those exquisite lines in the  
'White Doe,' you remember, -

'And right across the velvet road  
Towards the very house of God,  
Comes gliding in with lonely gleams,  
Comes gliding in serene & slow,  
By a silent - as a dream  
A solitary Doe!'

Read me the 'The Monk & the Bird.'

Oh. Don't - you like Longfellow's version much better?

'All about  
The broad, sweet, sunshiny day without  
Filling the summer air; - & soon, its  
delicious!'

"Yes, Longfellow catches the poetry of the situation here  
& French - prose! Do you think he would say  
'Save me from my friends'? All the same, he  
has this quality of true poet - he gives you clear  
glass to look through, & his glass is a window  
thru' which you see many things. So many from  
these poets - open a painted window, rich & beautiful  
in itself, & casting rich reflections within, but -  
giving not more than rainbow hints of the  
landscape without."

"And I think I know what you mean: I have read  
really beautiful verses which only gave me a sense  
of ~~some~~ things delightful but - no clear thoughts. What  
a delicious taste we have had! And will you  
lend me your French? I want to read every  
line & find out new things for myself. I want to copy  
some of the sonnets, too, to say them in 'naughty'."

Charlotte M. Mason

(Author of Home Education)